

**Baker City Planning Commission
Baker County Courthouse
1995 Third Street, Ste. 131
Baker City, Oregon 97814
Phone: (541) 523-8219**

The minutes are only a third-party summary of the original meeting. For a complete transcript, an audio recording is available. Please contact the Baker City-County Planning Department for further information.

**Baker City Planning Commission
Public Hearing
August 20, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Baker County Commission Chambers**

I. Call to Order/Introductions

Present: Ken Rockwell, Laurie Parry, Tom Shrider, Laura Klement

Absent: Larisa Bogardus, Aaron Still

Staff Present: Planning Director Tara Micka, Senior Planner Madison Tomac, Planning Technician Jared Hearing

II. Old Business

Review of Minutes from the 07.16.2025 Planning Commission Hearing

Commissioner Rockwell moved to approve the 07.16.2025 Planning Commission minutes as presented. Commissioner Shrider seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

III. New Business

Vice Chair Parry read the public hearing statement.

CUP-25-083

Declaration of Ex-Parte Contact, Bias, & Conflict of Interest regarding CUP-25-083:

There were none. Commissioner Shrider stated that he drove by the building. Other Commissioners did the same.

Senior Planner Madison Tomac summarized the application. Vice Chair Parry invited the applicant to testify.

Larry Bankston (applicant), 1990 NE 10th Street, Hermiston, OR 97838

Mr. Bankston stated the intent is to reestablish a house of worship in the existing building. They would like to move their existing church into the building. Vice Chair Parry asked about funding to make the required improvements to the building. Commissioner Rockwell asked questions about the parking needs for the existing church as there is no on-site parking available at the new location.

Commissioner Rockwell asked about the fence and proposed ADA parking spaces. Mr. Bankston said that there isn't an existing ADA access into the building. Mr. Bankston stated that in conversations with the City that no approval for an ADA space would be given until the project moves forward.

Vice Chair Parry asked about hours of operation. There was discussion that there would be parking available in the area because most of the gatherings associated with the church would be after 6pm during the week and on Sundays.

Testimony in Favor

Suzi Smith, 18081 Stall Road, Baker City, OR

Her company is representing both sides of the property. They are excited for the community to use a vacant building. If the church were allowed to occupy the vacant building, then the other structure the church is currently using would also be sold.

Ron Edge, 2139 Court Street, Baker City, OR

He stated that he lives across the street from the building and is in favor of the church.

Testimony in Opposition

Terry Shirley, 1739 3rd Street, Baker City, OR

He loves the idea of having a church. He walks by the building on a daily basis. He had one concern about whether the structure would be used as a shelter. The applicant clarified that it is not proposed to be used as a shelter.

Vice Chair Parry asked the applicant for any closing comments and he didn't have any, so she closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Shrider stated that the parking is an issue, but if the church were allowed, then a vacant building would be occupied.

Commissioner Rockwell said the need for parking is considerably less than the requirement of the Code. Off site parking can be facilitated based on existing streets. It will have minimal impact to this area and it is a unique situation that it isn't setting a problem for future situations. There is plenty of parking in the area, which is more than needed. He added that there is parking available during the times the church would need to use parking. The impacts do not need to be mitigated.

Commissioner Klement read a portion of the criteria about not restricting on-street parking.

Vice Chair Parry asked the applicant whether he has read and agrees to the Conditions of Approval as outlined on pages 34-35 of the staff report. The applicant said that he doesn't see a problem with the requirements.

Commissioner Rockwell said that based on the testimony presented, the recommended findings and Conditions of Approval, the criteria are met.

Commissioner Rockwell made a motion to approve CUP-25-83 Commissioner Shrider seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Updates and Future Items

Director's Report

There was none.

Date and Time for the Next Meeting

Next meeting will be September 17, 2025, at 6:00 pm.

V. Adjourn

Vice Chair Parry adjourned meeting at 6:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jared Hearing
Baker City-County Planning Department

DRAFT